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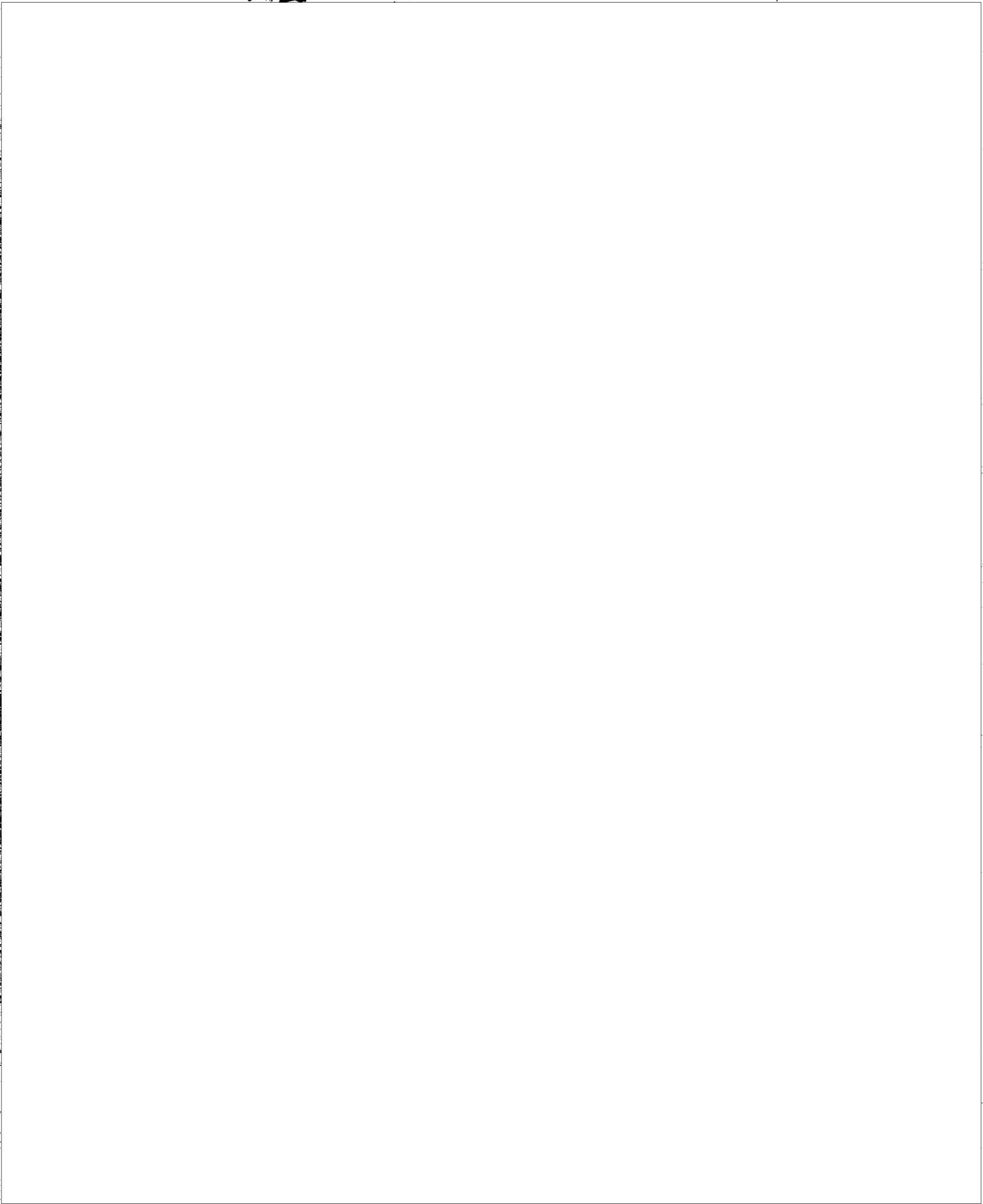
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Weekly Summary

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ALTERNATIVES TO NON-PROLIFERATION

A second session of the committee preparing for next year's Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference will begin in Geneva next week. The US views the conference as a means of attracting more adherents to the treaty and otherwise strengthening it. The non-proliferation system established by the 1968 treaty is being increasingly challenged, however.

The Indian nuclear explosion on May 18 provided the catalyst for a number of countries to re-examine their nuclear policies. More importantly, the failure of the US and the USSR to condemn the Indian action has raised doubts among many countries about the commitment of the major powers to nuclear non-proliferation. Many now perceive no disadvantage to keeping the nuclear option open, a view that has been reinforced by the US decision to provide nuclear equipment to Israel and Egypt.

Within recent months, the concept of the regional nuclear free zone—similar to the 1967 Latin American Nuclear Free Zone—has become the most frequently proposed alternative. Increased interest in the concept of nuclear free zones has led the Iranians to revive their proposal to establish a nuclear free zone in the Middle East, although they have deliberately left the geographical limits of the zone undefined. The Pakistanis have already made known their intention to submit to the UN a proposal for a Southeast Asian nuclear free zone if the Indian subcontinent is excluded from the Iranian proposal.

Earlier this year, a Nigerian spokesman suggested reconsideration of the 1964 Declaration of the Organization of African Unity regarding a nuclear free zone for Africa. Most recently, Romania promoted the concept of nuclear free zones, declaring that regional regimes should encourage peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The countries affected by these regional arrangements are also claiming new rights for parties to such nuclear-free zones. In a recent memorandum submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency, the organization responsible for administering the Latin American Nuclear Free Zone suggested that parties to regional arrangements should enjoy the same benefits as parties to the non-proliferation treaty. While that treaty has long been condemned by its critics as perpetuating discriminatory arrangements in favor of the nuclear powers, incentives for accession to the treaty itself would be severely diminished if this proposal is widely accepted.

The US has consistently maintained that four conditions must be met if a nuclear free zone is to be recognized:

- the initiative should be taken by the states in the region concerned;
- the zone should include all states in the area whose participation is deemed important;
- the creation of a zone should not disturb necessary security arrangements;
- provision should be made for adequate verification.

The actual establishment of a nuclear free zone and the interpretation of what this entails are up to the countries in the region, however, and it is thus possible that there would be provision for conducting peaceful nuclear explosions. Under the terms of the treaty, states not possessing nuclear weapons are prohibited from conducting peaceful nuclear explosions, although the US, UK, and USSR are obligated to make available any technology derived from nuclear research.

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